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AUTHOR Narang, Harbans L.
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ABSTRACT

To help achieve success, students must construct purposes for reading so that they can gain the appropriate kind of information while reading. After a student has set a purpose for reading, she/he may preview the material to be read. The next step is to read the material at an appropriate speed considering the purpose for reading and the nature of the material. When reading is taking place, comprehension problems may arise for a variety of reasons. A good reader becomes aware of these problems because she/he is monitoring comprehension. A reader may use any of the following strategies if comprehension problems arise during reading: ignore the problem and continue reading; suspend judgment; form a tentative hypothesis; use text information; reread the current sentence; reread the previous context; or go to an expert source. Making notes during reading to summarize what has been read is important, especially if the purpose is to use information for a written or oral presentation. Successful learners are not only aware of their metacognitive strategies but also use them to control and monitor their learning. (Two figures are included and 10 references are attached. Appendixes include: a list of approaches to improve reading in every class, the "One Q Five R" Version and the "Six R" Version.) (MG)

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HELPING STUDENTS BECOME INDEPENDENT READERS

**Dr. Harbans Narang
Faculty of Education
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada, S4S 0A2**

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HELPING STUDENTS BECOME INDEPENDENT READERS

H. L. Narang

The desire to succeed is natural in all human beings. In colleges and universities students like to achieve academic success. Main (1980), a Scottish researcher, points out that consistent work and study habits contribute to success in college. According to Duffy and Roehler (1987) good readers use a number of strategies for reading, whereas poor readers hardly use any. Flavell and Heatherington, (1981) demonstrated that adult disabled readers were not aware of reading tasks and strategies. Winograd and Paris (1988) suggest that metacognition or awareness of one's thought processes while reading is a necessary step in selecting appropriate strategies to match with one's purpose for reading.

It appears that students must construct purpose(s) for reading so that they can gain the appropriate kind of information while reading. Reading may be done for one or more of the following purposes:

1. Obtaining factual information
2. Understanding the sequence of events/steps
3. Finding main idea(s)
4. Finding cause and effect relationships
5. Making comparison and contrast
6. Distinguishing between facts and opinions
7. Making inferences
8. Evaluating author's opinions and conclusions
9. Finding solution to personal, professional, and social problem
10. Seeking sheer pleasure

In colleges and universities the instructors most often set the purposes for reading for students in the form of questions or instructional objectives. Students can also learn to set their own purposes. They may be guided by the lecture-notes and the headings and sub-headings used by the text author. Self-questioning by the learner is a metacognitive activity. Questions can be generated before, during and after reading each section of the text. The instructor can model question-asking and provide guided practice in this strategy. Andre and Anderson (1978-79) developed a self-questioning study techniques for high school students which can be adapted for college students.

After a student has set a purpose for reading, she/he may preview the material to be read. This preview is intended to get an overview of the nature of the material and how it is organized so that the reader can focus on the section(s) that are pertinent to the purpose for reading.

The next step apparently is to read the material at a speed that would be appropriate in light of the purpose for reading and the nature of the material. Sometimes reading is done fast and sometimes it is done slow. If the purpose of reading is to locate specific brief information such as a name, place or date of an event, scanning, which is a type

of very fast reading, is needed. However, if the purpose of reading is to get an overview of an article or a chapter, skimming or rapid reading is expected. Noting details and interpreting the author's point of view would require slow reading. Differentiating between fact and opinion or questioning the author's reasoning would also require slow speed of reading. An effective reader, therefore, has several speeds of reading. A description of reading speeds appropriate for different types of materials provided by Thomas and Robinson (1982) is included in Appendix A.

When reading is taking place, comprehension problems may arise. A good reader becomes aware of these problems because she/he is monitoring comprehension. Comprehension problems arise for a variety of reasons. The material being read may have lexical difficulty. The vocabulary used may be new and sentence structure complex. The writer may have made assumptions about the reader which may not be correct. There may be some gaps left in the reasoning behind an argument. The reader may not have developed an appropriate background needed to fully understand the unfamiliar material. A metacognitive reader would ask "What do I know about this topic." "What concepts do I need to develop before I can understand this piece of writing. It is important for a reader to build an adequate background about the topic before starting to read it.

If comprehension problems arise during reading, a reader may use any of the following strategies suggested by Collin and Smith (1980).

1. Ignore the problem and continue reading.
2. Suspend judgment.
3. Form a tentative hypothesis, using text information.
4. Reread the current sentence.
5. Reread the previous context.
6. Go to an expert source.

Making notes during reading and summarizing what we have read is important specially if the purpose is to use information for a written or oral presentation. Here again students must learn strategies for note-taking and summarization. Pauk (1989) devised a system called "The Cornell Note-Taking System" which is used by students at many universities. This system has two versions known as (1) Six R, and (2) One Q5R. An example of each from Pauk is provided in Appendix B.

Day (1980) developed rules for summarization. Hare and Borchardt (1984-85) used these rules and developed the following guidelines for helping students in writing a summary of a text (See figure 1).

Successful learners are not only aware of their metacognitive strategies but also use them to control and monitor their learning. This is what makes them independent learners. Poor learners can be taught to become independent learners through training in metacognitive activities. A model of the metacognitive process is presented below (See figure 2). Appropriate instructional activities for various stages of the model can be developed by the instructor.

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Approach	How Fast	When to Use
<i>Scanning</i> , not a true reading rate—just glancing until you find what you want	<i>maybe</i> 1500 or more words per minute (rate is an individual matter)	when glancing down pages to find a single piece of information
<i>Skimming</i> (previewing or overviewing), not a true reading rate—just getting the gist of the article, hitting the high points.	<i>maybe</i> 800–1000 words per minute	to get the general content of an article, "what it's all about"
<i>Actual Reading Rates</i>		
1. <i>Very rapid</i>	<i>maybe</i> 450 words or more per minute	for light, easy, fast-moving fiction (entertainment reading)
2. <i>Rapid</i>	<i>maybe</i> 350 words per minute	for fairly easy materials when you want only the more important facts, ideas
3. <i>Average</i>	<i>perhaps</i> 250 words per minute	for magazine articles such as <i>Science Digest</i> ; some chapters in social studies; some travel books; some novels like <i>My Antonia</i> or <i>Cry the Beloved Country</i>
4. <i>Slow and careful</i>	from 250 words per minute—all the way down to a <i>slow</i> 50 words per minute or even <i>slower</i>	for difficult concepts and vocabulary for thorough reading of technical material for retaining every detail for weighing the truth of difficult reading (Here "thought time" is needed in addition to reading time.)

How do psychologists account for remembering? What's a "memory trace"? What are the three memory systems? How long does sensory memory retain information? How is information transferred to STM? What are the retention times of STM? What's the capacity of the STM? How to hold information in STM? What are the retention times of LTM? What are the six ways to transfer information from STM to LTM?	Psych. 105 - Prof. Martin - Sept. 14 (Mon.) <u>MEMORY</u> A. Memory tricky - Can recall instantly many trivial things of childhood; yet, forget things recently worked hard to learn & retain. B. Memory Trace 1. Fact that we retain information means that some change was made in the brain. 2. Change called "memory trace." 3. "Trace" probably a molecular arrangement similar to molecular changes in a magnetic recording tape. C. Three memory systems: sensory, short-term, long-term. 1. <u>Sensory</u> (lasts one second) Ex. Words or numbers sent to brain by sight (visual image) start to disintegrate within a few tenths of a second & gone in one full second, unless quickly transferred to S-T memory by verbal repetition. 2. Short-term memory (STM) (lasts 30 seconds) a. Experiments show: a syllable of 3 letters remembered 50% of the time after 3 seconds. Totally forgotten end of 30 seconds. b. S-T memory - limited capacity - holds average of 7 items. c. More than 7 items -- jettisons some to make room. d. To hold items in STM, must rehearse -- must hear sound of words internally or externally. 3. Long-Term memory (LTM) (lasts a lifetime or short time). a. Transfer fact or idea by: (1) <u>Associating</u> w/information already in LTM (2) <u>Organizing</u> information into meaningful units (3) <u>Understanding</u> by comparing & making relationships. (4) <u>Frameworking</u> - fit pieces in like in a jigsaw puzzle. (5) <u>Reorganizing</u> - combining new & old into a new unit. (6) <u>Rehearsing</u> - aloud to keep memory trace strong
Three kinds of memory systems are sensory, which retains information for about one second; short-term, which retains for a maximum of thirty seconds; and long-term, which varies from a lifetime of retention to a relatively short time. The six ways (activities) to transfer information to the long-term memory are: associating, organizing, understanding, frameworking, reorganizing and rehearsing.	

FIGURE 7.6 The One Q Five R Version
The narrow column contains questions.

	Psych. 102 - Prof. Goldsmith - Sept. 14 th (Mon.)
Weaknesses & strengths	A. Build Self-Confidence - 15 steps
Life's goal	1. Assess strengths & weaknesses
Negatives	a. Set goals accordingly
Guilt & shame	2. Decide what you'd like your life to be
Personality defects	a. Rework your thinking to bring inner script up to date
Points of view	3. Bury all <u>negative</u> memories
Negative labels	a. Forgive others & self
Criticism	b. Remember past successes - even minor ones
Failures blessing	4. Wipe out any guilt & shame
Inadequacy	a. Don't allow these thoughts mental entrance
Relax	5. Don't attribute present behavior to personality defects
Social	a. Real causes might be economic, political, social, etc.
Playing it too cool	6. Events may be seen differently by different people
Goals:	a. Rejections or put-downs might not be actual
long-range	7. Never label yourself negatively
short-range	a. Such as: stupid, ugly, failure, incorrigible
Not an object	8. Accept criticism of a <u>specific action</u> , but not of <u>you</u> as a person
- active actor	a. Accept constructive criticism graciously
- <u>live</u> your life	9. Failures can be a blessing -- goals not right for you
	a. Avoids later let-down
	10. Don't tolerate people, jobs, situations that make you feel inadequate
	a. If can't change them or you -- walk out
	11. Take time to relax & meditate -- hobbies
	a. Keep in touch w/ your inner self
	12. Be social -- enjoy other people
	a. See their needs and help them
	13. Don't overprotect your ego -- it's resilient
	a. Better to try & fail, than to claw up - numbing!
	14. Develop long-ranged goals, also short-ranged ones
	a. Evaluate progress & whisper word of praise in your own ear
	15. You're not a passive object -- you can make things happen
	a. You're a product of millions of years of evolution & made in God's image
	b. Don't worry about how to live your life, lose yourself -- be absorbed in <u>living</u> it
Through deep thinking, decide what you want to be. What to do with your life. Write out long-term & short-term goals. Eliminate totally & permanently <u>all</u> <u>negative</u> feelings & occurrences past, present, & future. Do things. Try things. Ego can take set-backs. Don't withdraw to solitary "safety." Enter the stream of life. Be busy swimming in it.	

FIGURE 7.5 The Six R Version

The narrow column contains key words and phrases.

FOUR GENERAL STEPS TO HELP WITH THE FOUR+
SPECIFIC RULES FOR WRITING A SUMMARY

1. Make sure you understand the text. Ask yourself, "What was this text about?" "What did the writer say?" "Try to say the general theme to yourself.
2. Look Back. Reread the text to make sure you got the theme right. Also read to make sure that you really understand what the important parts of the text are. Star important parts.

Now Use the Four Rules for Writing a Summary

3. Rethink. Reread a paragraph of the text. Try to say the theme of that paragraph to yourself. Is the theme a topic sentence? Have you underlined it? Or is the topic sentence missing? If it is missing, have you written one in the margin?
4. Check and double-check. Did you leave in any lists? Make sure you don't list things out in your summary. Did you repeat yourself? Make sure you didn't. Did you skip anything? Is all the important information in the summary?

Four Rules for Writing a Summary

1. Collapse lists. If you see a list of things, try to think of a word or phrase name for the whole list. For example, if you saw a list like eyes, ears, neck, arms, and legs, you could say "body parts." Or, if you saw a list like ice skating, skiing or sledding, you could say "winter sports."
2. Use topic sentences. Often authors write a sentence that summarizes a whole paragraph. It is called a topic sentence. If the author gives you one, you can use it in your summary. Unfortunately, not all paragraphs contain topic sentences. That means you may have to make up one for yourself. If you don't see a topic sentence, make up one of your own.
3. Get rid of unnecessary detail. Some text information can be repeated in a passage. In other words, the same thing can be said in a number of different ways, all in one passage. Other text information can be unimportant, or trivial. Since summaries are meant to be short, get rid of repetitive or trivial information.

4. Collapse paragraphs. Paragraphs are often related to one another. Some paragraphs explain one or more other paragraphs. Some paragraphs just expand on the information presented in other paragraphs. Some paragraphs are more necessary than other paragraphs. Decide which paragraphs should be kept or gotten rid of, and which might be joined together.

A Final Suggestion

- + Polish the summary. When a lot of information is reduced from original passage, the resulting concentrated information often sounds very unnatural. Fix this problem and create a more natural-sounding summary. Adjustments may include but are not limited to: paraphrasing, the insertion of connecting words like "and" or "because," and the insertion of introductory or closing statements. Paraphrasing is especially useful here, for two reasons: one, because it improves your ability to remember the material, and two, it avoids using the author's words, otherwise known as plagiarism.

Hare, Victoria C. and Borchardt, Kathleen M. "Four General Steps to Help the Four Specific Rules for Writing a Summary," Reading Research Quarterly, 20 (1984-85), p. 66.

A MODEL OF METACOGNITIVE PROCESS

H.L. Narang

